

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

25 OCTOBER 2022

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW

2021/2022

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an annual review of activities carried out by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on behalf of the Directorate of Public Health (Emergency Planning) to discharge statutory duties under the Safety at Sports Grounds (SatSGs) and related legislation during 2021/2022.

Background

2. Members will recall that the legislative background for the Council's responsibilities for SatSGs is based on the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) 2005.

3. WCC therefore has an interest in all sports grounds in the County but more specifically those that are formally "designated" and stadia that have "regulated stands" as follows:

4. The "**Designated**" stadium in Worcestershire as defined by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 is:

- **Sixways Stadium** – home of Worcester Warriors Rugby Football Club

5. The "**Regulated Stands**" in Worcestershire – stadia with stands that provide covered accommodation for 500 or more spectators and covered by the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) 2005 are:

- **The Grandstand** – Pitchcroft, Worcester Racecourse,
- **Aggborough Stadium** – Kidderminster Harriers Football Club
- **The Victoria Ground** – Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club

6. The Worcestershire County Cricket Ground at New Road and the Worcester Arena are neither designated nor regulated. Consequently, these venues are not subject to SatSGs legislation due to the nature of definitions contained within that legislation.

7. Following a review of the administration and delivery of the S@SGs duty, P&RC members are informed that the S@SGs function including SAGs co-ordination was transferred, under a legal agreement, from WCC Public Health to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) in August 2020. WCC retains its statutory duty in relation to the legislation with WRS acting on its behalf to deliver the function and service.

Safety Certificates

8. In discharging its statutory responsibilities WCC must consider applications for, and issue to qualified persons, Safety Certificates for designated sports grounds with the aim of:

- **Securing reasonable safety and setting maximum capacity** at the sports grounds
- **Serving a Prohibition Notice** in respect of a sports ground if the Council consider that "the admission of spectators to a sports ground or any part of a sports ground involves or will involve a risk to them so serious that, until steps have been taken to reduce it to a reasonable level, admission of spectators to that part of the ground ought to be prohibited or restricted".
- Issuing a **Safety Certificate** for Designated Stadia or Regulated Stands in the County to "secure reasonable safety in the Stand when it is in use for viewing the specified activity or activities at the ground".

9. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) 2005 ensures a risk-based approach to fire safety. The County Council is the enforcing authority for the FSO to ensure that all necessary fire risk assessments have been made at all four locations and their premises covered by the SatSGs legislation. This assessment is carried out by H&W F&RS on behalf of WCC.

Safety Advisory Groups

10. Management and discharge of SatSGs legislation is administered through a site-specific Safety Advisory Group (SAG) based on each sports venue. SAG meetings were convened regularly throughout the year and co-ordinated and administered by WCC Public Health (Emergency Planning). Agency membership of each SAG is composed of:

- Worcestershire County Council (WRS Senior Practitioner or nominated representative)
- West Mercia Police,
- Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service,
- West Midlands Ambulance Service,
- District Councils (Parking Enforcement, Building Control),
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Environmental Health, Licensing, Health and Safety) and,
- the host stadium Safety Officer and Club representatives.

11. All SAG decisions are made on a multi-agency basis under the chairmanship of the County Council (WRS). Under the terms of the Scheme of Delegation and Policy statements the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning and Regulatory Committee are made aware of and consulted on any significant alterations and modifications to General and Special Safety Certificates issued. No significant alterations or modifications were necessary during 2021/22.

12. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic spectators were either not allowed to attend rugby, football, and horse racing etc until July 2021, or were allowed in small numbers. SAGs considered the relevant sporting association's COVID guidance and discussed those controls and requirements with the safety officers at existing venues.

Venue Summaries:

Sixways Stadium, Worcester Warriors RFC

13. Warriors play in the English Premiership and the Sixways stadium continues to be managed in a manner that meets current legislation. Collaboration between the Club and its SAG members remains excellent. All safety documentation and professional reports are up to date and in good order.

14. The safety certificate holder is the Worcester Warriors RFC's Stadium Manager and Safety Officer. The Safety Officer and deputy hold relevant and appropriate safety management qualifications.

15. Worcester Warriors met safety management criteria and collaboration with key safety management staff remained excellent throughout the financial year.

Aggborough Stadium, Kidderminster Harriers FC

16. Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (KHFC) play in the 6th tier of English Football National League North. Matchday safety management at KHFC Aggborough Stadium is carried out by qualified Stadium Safety Officers. The stadium safety certificate holder is the Club Chairman with safety managements the responsibility of its Safety Officer. supported by a deputy.

17. All four of the stadium's stands are managed as individual regulated stands. KHFC meet current safety management criteria and collaboration with the SAG has been excellent throughout the 21/22 year.

18. During the season members of the SAG carried out inspections examining the spectator safety standards and records set and maintained by the club. These inspections were noted as being satisfactory. The highlight of the season for KHFC was reaching the 4th Round of the FA Cup.

The Grandstand, Worcester Racecourse

19. Worcester Racecourse is owned by Worcester City Council with the Grandstand and surrounding area together with the racecourse is operated by Arena Racing Company on a long-term leasing arrangement. The Grandstand is managed as a Regulated Stand under the SatSGs legislation. The Racecourse has a designated safety certificate holder and safety officer.

20. Worcester Racecourse SAG operates site specific working practices that meet the special safety considerations of horse racing and its spectators. These arrangements recognise that crowd behaviour and dynamics at horse racing is very different to that

found at football or rugby grounds. The Racecourse employs trained stewards and provides one per 250 attendees (increasing to 1 per 100 where necessary).

21. Worcester Racecourse holds jump racing meetings during the summer between April to October. The SAG meeting for the racecourse was held virtually however, an in-person site visit was conducted during the season.

Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC

22. Bromsgrove Sporting leases the Victoria Ground on a long-term arrangement from Bromsgrove District Council who own the freehold. The Main and North stand are Regulated Stands under the SatSGs legislation.

23. The Bromsgrove Sporting FC safety certificate holder changed and safety officer role changed hands in Oct 2021. The Club plays in the Southern League Premier Division Central and has 14 regular stewards on its books.

24. Maintenance of the Victoria Ground is carried out with co-operation of owners Bromsgrove DC and the stadium facility is maintained to accepted standards. SAG members continue to be concerned about spectators leaving the stadium onto the busy road outside of the ground and this will be closely monitored by the SAG to minimise disruption and spectator safety.

Non-Statutory Event Safety Management Advice

25. The multi-agency members involved with the SAG's also provide safety management advice to several well-established venues and events that take place throughout the year. This process ensures that best practice is shared with organisers, safety managers and stewards many of whom work at the designated or regulated grounds. Some of the venues and events where advice has been offered include:

- Malvern, Three Counties Showground.
- Worcester Light Night
- Worcester Christmas Street Fayre
- Tri County SAG for the 3 Shires car rally
- Passion Play Worcester
- Hanbury Show
- Worcester City Run
- Worcester Show

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

26. The Fire Safety RRO duty is currently administered by the County Council through a Service Level Agreement provided by H&W Fire and Rescue Service. There were no significant issues at sites managed through the SatSGs legislation during 2021/2022.

Recommendation

27. The Director of Public Health recommends that:

- a) The 2021/22 Annual Review of activities carried out by the Council to manage and implement the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation be noted: and**
- b) It be further noted that the Council has successfully met its statutory duty in respect of Safety at Sports Grounds legislation during 2021/22**

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Public Health) the following papers relate to the subject matter of this item:

WCC Planning and Regulatory Committee Terms of Reference 2020

WCC Planning and Regulatory Committee SAG Policy 2020

WCC Enforcement Policy Relating to Safety at Sports Grounds 2020